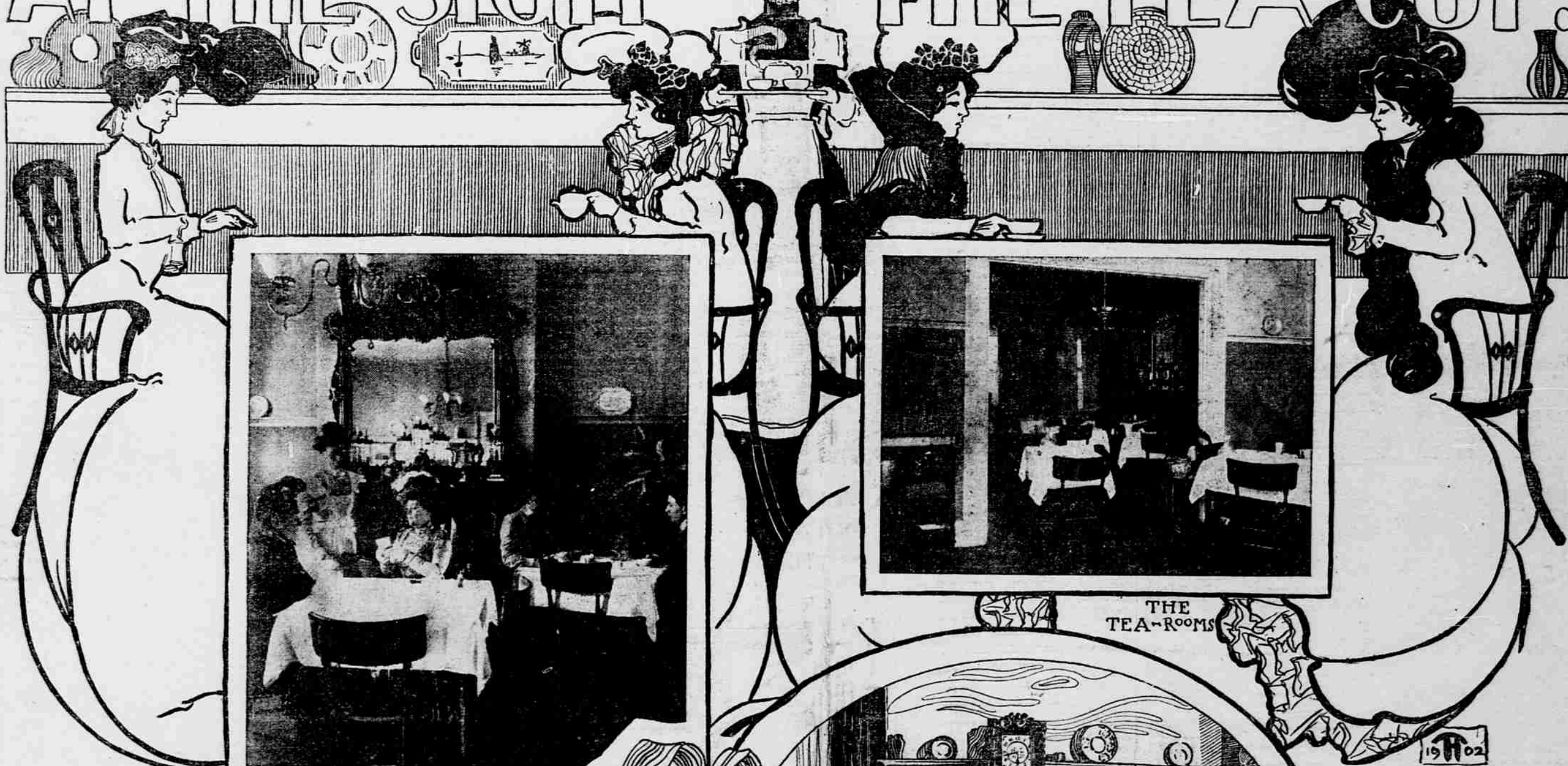


WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1902.

AT THE SIGN OF THE TEA-CUP.



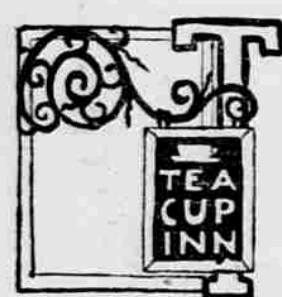
UNDER THE HISTORIC MIRROR.

THE TEA-ROOMS.

THE QUAINT OLD FIRE-PLACE.

Society Foregathers About the Samovar, and as the Hissing Steam Arises Comforts Itself With Smart Sayings and Sage Reflections—Result of the Happily Conceived Idea of One Woman Who Had Tired of the Routine of Every Day Upper Tendom.

By "INO."



Just aimed at so great an institution—and the daintiest little Tea House of Ten Thousand Joys outside of Jap-land.

It fluttered into existence one May day, looked quizzically about and settled down as neighbor to the Metropolitan Club.

It was as unobtrusive, as fragrant, as welcome as a spring-time violet. It put forth a gay little early English sign, designed by one of the faculty of the Corcoran School of Art.

It scattered announcement cards bearing the name of Mrs. David B. Henderson, Mrs. Laurier Dunn, Mrs. George Sternberg and Mrs. Henry F. Blount as patronesses.

It swung airy draperies and laid out snowy linens in symphonic rooms of blue and white. It displayed treasures of art in brass samovars and copper kettles. It sprouted palms and set out bulging bowls of meadow flowers and played a game with the sunlight by means of prismatic candlesticks a century old.

And then the bellows blew, the log burned, the kettle sang "I didn't hear the cricket chirp," and the Inn was opened.

A great and ornate mirror, once the property of John Quincy Adams, reflected a throng of patrons, and behold, the patronage of the choicest. A quick leap from experiment to success, from success to a fad of fashion, yet the Dutch-like little Inn took the leap like a thoroughbred.

The women of the army set will tell you they are responsible for the popularity of the Inn. The Metropolitan Club men claim a share in its uplifting by the regularity of their patronage.

The matinee girls have found it to be the one Elysian spot where youth and beauty may lunch unchaperoned; and that accounts for the frequency of their coming. Society women drop in at 5 o'clock for a bit of gossip over the tea cups, and they eat marmalade and thin bread and butter.

The girls of a neighboring boarding school cannot celebrate a birthday without a frosted, candied cake from the Inn; the kind of a cake that goes home in a box and is a poetic study in icy-spiciness still life.

The Inn never goes out. Is that clear?

In other words, its activity does not slumber. When the luncheon hour is over, the catering business goes actively on, supplying refreshments for parties, teas and receptions. At night it is especially awake when a private supper, after the play, is served, and the small tables give place to one round mahogany, rich in appointments, a-twinkle with petticoated candles. Such a supper is served incomparably. Or it is a card party for which the rooms are lent; or a private lecture. The Inn is in demand because it is a novelty; because, too, its kitchen ditty is worthy a memorial in the Halls of Fame.

It is not a cafe, a restaurant, a quick lunch or a woman's exchange. What, then? Nothing short of an inspiration, and the inspiration of a clever girl. "She was a good housekeeper, of course," you begin.

Not a bit of it. She never turned an egg-beater in her life. She delighted in Wagner, rode horseback, drove, played golf and tennis, glided in dogs, did every conceivable thing outside the house, and little within, save cultivate a musical talent.

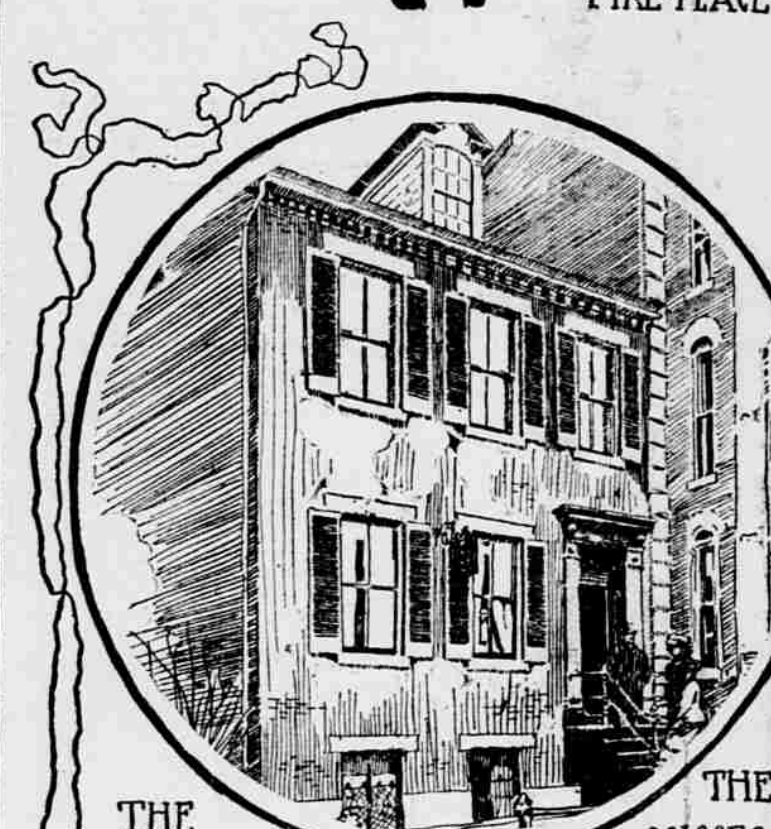
And then one day she was seized with the "strange life" mania; she wanted an employment, and she sat down to think. Perhaps she slept over it, being a woman. Anyway, she dreamed a dream of aesthetic food supply, and she awoke to make the dream a thing of flesh and gravies.

The inspired dreamer was Miss Annah Coleman, of this city. There was a sister, Miss Catharine Coleman, visiting some where in the North. She was summoned by telegraph. She came; she put aside her embroidery, renounced her visiting list and plunged into the scheme with enthusiasm. The two girls produced the Tea Cup Inn in less time than a week.

And such an Inn! Worthy of a Dickens to immortalize its steaming, frying, boiling, broiling, sizzling, sizzling, dishes. They come up hot and fragrant; they go down rapturously.

You experience transports over a pineapple mayonnaise, or eat of the froth of paradise in a dish of maple mouse. You can toy, cat-like, with a juicy bird and revel in honey and waffles at the Tea Cup Inn, and when you are fortified—never satiated—and sit back in your corner and hark to the ticking of an ancient, moon-faced clock, you see visions—visions of an aromatic kitchen of your childhood.

You see white aprons bared to wield the rolling pin; you smell a savory filling; you watch a firm thumb press the edges of a pastry; you follow its progress into a huge oven and then, gathering in a crumb that lingers on your lips, you know the today of life is equal to the yesterday,



THE INN.

THE MISSES COLEMAN.



THE MISSES COLEMAN.

and that you have just eaten of the identical pie "that mother used to make."

You experience all this, of course, if you are a man.

A woman's day-dream is different.

Upon occasion she can perform an ecstatic turn over a racy, gamy rabbit or a frothy, bubbling Newburgh, but what permanently appeals to her at the Sign of the Tea Cup is the immaculate conception of its keeping, its spotless linen,

shining crystal, dainty porcelain. The trim maids in blue and white uniforms are restful to a woman's senses. She likes the idea of lunching where D. A. R.'s harmoniously gather, where she rubs elbows with the brainy women of the Washington Club and beholds the heroes of the land and sea without their gold lace regiments.

It is satisfying to order the same jellies and cakes that regularly delight the pal-

ates of women of fashion like Mrs. Anson Mills, Mrs. Phil Sheridan, Mrs. H. C. Perkins, Mrs. Dailzell and Mrs. Wallace.

It is pleasant to have met ex-Secretary Herbert and Minister Conger lunching at the Inn; to have an occasional breezy chat with Mr. Willis Moore or to behold the consequential top-lofts of the French Embassy eating their breakfasts at high noon.

It is sweet to meditate over a lobster chop on Friday in the society of the Rev. Dr. Skerrett and his weekly company of high church men.

And when a woman's husband gives a poker party, she does not order the supper from the Tea Cup Inn because the Speaker of the House does his catering there.

Of such is the Kingdom of Women.

A GENTLE SPREE.

THE day was fair for a Washington January, sunshiny, bracing, and wholesome, a farewell gift of the outgoing year. Three demure maids from boarding school were walking down the Avenue abreast, and chattering like magpies.

"I do feel just like having a lark," said the black-eyed one.

"So do I," said the girl with the Titian hair.

"It's just the day for it," said the mouse of a creature in grey.

"Let's do something."

"Let's."

"What shall we do? It ought to be a regular spree, for Frances is going home tomorrow," said the grey mouse.

"I've had a perfectly lovely time," said the brunette.

"I'll tell you," said the girl with the auburn hair, "we'll ride in an automobile."

"Oh Caro! What a perfectly splendid idea!"

"Do you know where they keep them, Lulu?"

"Yes," said the grey mouse, "down near Thirteenth Street."

"I've never been down there," said Caro, dubiously.

"Never mind; there are three of us,"

It was a grave business, choosing that automobile, and trying to look as if they rode in such things every day. They succeeded, or thought they did, and crowded in, and the wheels and their tongues ran races all the way up Fourteenth Street.

"Girls!" said Caro, suddenly, "do you suppose that man can hear what we are saying?"

"If he does he must be on the broad grin, because we certainly have showed that we're new," laughed Frances. "How do you suppose they stop these things, anyhow?"

"Maybe we call to the driver through that hole in the roof," suggested Lulu.

"There ought to be an electric button somewhere around," said Caro, thoughtfully. "Here's something that looks like it. Let's press it and see what will happen."

So they did.

Then they gave orders to go somewhere else, and off they went. Before they knew it the descending sun warned them of dinner.

"We girls went on a regular lark this afternoon," announced Lulu at the dinner table.

"Where did you go?" asked the cousin from Princeton, looking amused.

"We had a ride in an automobile. It was awfully exciting. The only thing that wasn't real stylish about it was that we sat three on a seat, and when we got out we had to pay the driver on the sidewalk, because the hour was up, and came home in the car. It was a real spree."

"Good Lord!" thought the Princeton cousin as he went down town after dinner to see some of the fellows, "it doesn't take much to satisfy a girl."

HER MIRROR.

Of all the dainty trinkets
On Betty's boudoir shelf,
There's one of glass—I think it's
A sort of second self:
For once, when for a minute
I gazed in it alone,
I saw a face within it,
And it was Betty's aunt!

Some magic, necromancy,
Describe it as you deem:
A sentimental fancy,
Or fantasy of dream;

'Twas there, and fresh and pretty,
As any face could be,
And I—well, I know Betty,
That's proof enough for me!

I wish I might discover
By some such wizard art
The face of Betty's lover,
And satisfy my heart;
If I could get that mirror,
What better could I do?
What queer is might be queerer—
I might get Betty, too!

—Felix Carmen.